

# FINAL DECISION DOCUMENTATION and DECISION RATIONALE

## **Turnridge**

Environmental Assessment (EA) Number OR080-2003-02

USDI - Bureau of Land Management  
Oregon State Office, Salem District, Cascades Resource Area

Township 10 South, Range 3 East, Sections 1, 3 and 11; Willamette Meridian  
Linn County, Oregon

### **Introduction**

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has conducted an environmental analysis (Environmental Assessment Number OR080-2003-02) for two projects.

Project 1 is a proposed timber sale with two alternatives:

- Alternative A (Proposed Action) would regeneration harvest 81 acres, thin 14 acres, partial cut harvest 90 acres and salvage two acres of windthrown trees in the Matrix land use allocation (LUA).
- Alternative B would thin 14 acres, partial cut harvest 158 acres, and salvage two acres of windthrown trees in the Matrix LUA. No regeneration harvest was proposed in Alternative B.

Project 2 is a Riparian Management proposal to create habitat features such as coarse woody debris (CWD), snags, wolf trees and small canopy gaps within portions of the Riparian Reserve LUA by falling or base girdling trees, without removing any of the wood from these areas. A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was signed on June 11, 2003 and the EA and FONSI were then made available for public review.

This decision authorizes the implementation of only those activities directly related to and included within the timber sale (Project 1). My decision is based on site-specific analysis in the Environmental Assessment (EA # OR080-03-02), the supporting project record, management recommendations contained in the North Santiam River Watershed Assessment as well as the management direction contained in the Salem District Resource Management Plan (RMP) dated May 1995. A separate decision will be issued concerning the Riparian Management proposal (Project 2).

### **Decision**

I have decided to implement Alternative A (Proposed Action) of Turnridge Ridge Project 1 with modifications described below, hereafter referred to as the “selected action”. The selected action is shown on the Turnridge Timber Sale Exhibit A attached to this Decision Rationale.

## A. Summary of the Decision

### 1. Harvest

- Total harvest area is 153 acres and total harvest volume is 4127 MBF (6553 CCF), down from 187 acres analyzed in the EA. All harvest units are in the General Forest Management Area (GFMA) LUA.
  - Two acres of windthrown salvage were dropped from the selected action due to riparian and Coarse Woody Debris concerns;
  - **Units in the Connectivity LUA:**
    - Unit C-2, 18 acres of regeneration harvest, was dropped after the presence of a red tree vole nest was discovered by a citizen survey and confirmed by the BLM.
    - Unit C-4, four acres of partial cut harvest, was dropped because it was no longer economically viable after dropping the only other unit (C-2) in the immediate vicinity; and
  - Unit D-8.1 included four acres of regeneration harvest that was dropped from the project during layout – smaller than anticipated, feasibility and economic rationale.

#### *Crossover between EA and Contract Units*

Contract Unit No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Dropped	
EA Unit No.	D-1	D-6.1	D-6.2	D-8.1	D-8.2	A-1	B-2	B-1	C-2	C-4

- Regeneration harvest will take place in units 2, 3, 5, and 6 for a total of 65 acres, down from 81 acres analyzed in the EA. Approximately 890 trees (13 trees per acre) have been designated as reserve trees within regeneration harvest units to meet Green Tree Retention requirements;
- Partial cut will take place in units 7 and 8 for a total of 78 acres, down from 90 acres analyzed in the EA;
- Commercial thinning will take place in units 1 and 4 for a total of 10 acres, down from 14 acres analyzed in the EA; and
- Approximately 1/6 acre will be cleared for a road right-of-way within unit 7.

### 2. Logging

- All ground based logging with tracked or wheeled tractors would take place on slopes not steeper than 35 percent. Skyline yarding or cable winching would be required on slopes steeper than 35 percent and may be used on slopes less than 35 percent.
- Multiple pass tractor roads would use existing skid roads, where possible.
- Compacted area used by the purchaser (including multiple pass tractor roads, landing area enlarged or constructed by the purchaser, and skyline yarding roads) would be limited to 10 percent of the area on each harvest unit.

### 3. Road Access

- 350 feet of temporary, natural surface road would be constructed, down from 1,000 feet analyzed in the EA;

- Road renovation consisting of blading, shaping and some spot rocking of the existing surface, and brushing, ditch cleaning, culvert cleaning and culvert replacement on 3.2 miles would occur.

#### **4. *Fuels Treatment***

- All landing piles and miscellaneous piles remaining after other operations are complete would be covered and burned.
- Slash and debris on units 2, 5 and 6 would be machine piled, covered and burned.
- Slash and debris on unit 3 would be broadcast burned.

#### **5. *Blocking Skid Roads***

- After operations, main skid roads would be blocked.

#### **6. *Design Features and Mitigation Measures***

- All design features and mitigation measures described in the EA (pp. 7-13) have been incorporated into the timber sale contract.

#### **7. *Compliance with Direction***

- The selected action is consistent with applicable land use plans, policies, and programs. Programmatic documents covering this proposal are the Record of Decision for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and Other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines (ROD, January 2001); Salem District Resource Management Plan (May 1995); Record of Decision (ROD) for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl (April 1994); and the Western Oregon Program-Management of Competing Vegetation Record of Decision (August 1992). All of these documents may be reviewed at the Cascades Resource Area office.

## **Alternatives Considered**

### **Alternatives and Additional Project Dropped From Detailed Analysis:**

- ***No New Road Construction:*** The proposed road construction is within the analysis and intent of the RMP and facilitates logging in an economically and environmentally sound way. Eliminating the proposed road and skyline landing would delete approximately 5 acres from unit 8. Also, this road location is an existing unrecovered skid trail which would be used and recompacted again, both for this harvest operation and for regeneration harvest in the future.
- ***Thinning Only In Stands Younger Than 80 Years:*** Of the stands analyzed; only part of unit 1 is significantly younger than 80 years. An alternative of this type in this vicinity would be an entirely different proposal with different objectives fulfilling a different purpose and need.
- ***Fish Passage Project:*** A third project, to improve fish passage, was dropped when additional field review indicated that there were other barriers downstream that would severely limit potential benefits.

## **Alternatives Considered in Detail:**

The EA analyzed the effects of Alternative A (proposed action), Alternative B (no regeneration harvest), and the No Action alternative. A description of these alternative can be found in Chapter II of the EA (EA p. 13- 25).

## **Reasons for the Decision**

Considering the content of the EA and supporting project record, the management direction contained in the RMP and Survey and Manage ROD, and public comment, I have decided to implement the selected action as described above. My rationale for this decision follows:

The selected action, Timber Management Alternative A, as modified, addresses the identified purpose and need for action in that it would:

- Contribute to BLM timber management objectives by providing timber and other forest products as described in the Purpose and Need for the RMP (RMP p. 1); the Objectives for Matrix (GFMA portion) Land Use Allocation; and the Timber Resources Program (RMP pp. 46-48).
- Maintain water quality and other resource values; and
- Develop stand characteristics to maintain future forest management options and to maintain terrestrial habitats to support a diversity of forest species on Matrix lands.

In addition, the selected action:

- Offers an economically viable sale.
- Implements the Management Actions/Direction for GFMA to: “Schedule regeneration harvests to assure that, over time, harvest will occur in stands at or above the age which produces maximum average annual growth over the lifetime of a timber stand.” Timber Management Alternative B and the No Action Alternative do not implement this direction.
- Produces a greater volume of timber to contribute toward the allowable sale quantity than Timber Management Alternative B does, and from essentially the same land base. The No Action Alternative does not contribute any timber volume toward this objective.
- Maintains the existing transportation system.

Timber Management Alternative B was not selected for the following reasons:

- It does not contribute as much to meeting the immediate annual harvest volume target for the Cascades Resource Area as well as the selected action. (Purpose and Need, EA p. 8)
- To partial cut harvest units 2, 3, and 5 and to defer harvest of unit 6 would defer implementation of regeneration harvest in these stands beyond the timeframes analyzed in the FEIS and scheduled in the RMP to produce maximum average annual growth over the lifetime of the timber stand. (Purpose and Need, EA p. 8)
- The environmental analysis documented in the EA did not indicate any resource effects that would require the deferment of regeneration harvest.

The No Action alternative was not selected for the following reasons:

- The No Action alternative would not contribute to the immediate supply of timber (EA p. 38) to contribute to local and State economic diversity (Purpose and Need, EA p. 8)

- The No Action alternative would leave the long term timber producing capability on the project area unchanged (EA p. 38) rather than maximizing average annual growth.

## **Public Involvement/ Consultation/Coordination**

**Scoping:** In compliance with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the project appeared in the September 2000, December 2000, September 2001, and March 2001 editions of the quarterly Salem District Project Update, and in editions since then, which were mailed to over 1,070 addresses. A scoping letter dated May 25, 2001 was sent to 21 potentially affected and/or interested individuals, groups, and agencies. A summary of the responses received was included in EA Appendix D - Public Comments Summary.

**Comment Period and Comments:** The EA was made available on the Internet and notices were mailed on November 26, 2002 to approximately 109 agencies, individuals and organizations. A printed copy of the EA was mailed to approximately 12 agencies, individuals and organizations on November 27, 2002. A legal notice was placed in local newspapers soliciting public input on the action from November 27, 2002 to January 3, 2003.

Nineteen cards and letters from individuals were received from individuals and two letters were received from organizations during the EA comment period. The BLM response to substantive comments can be found in Appendix A of this Decision Rationale.

**Consultation/Coordination:** The Turnridge proposal was submitted for Formal Consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on September 3, 2002. Consultation with the USFWS resulted in a May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect Determination for northern spotted owl. The selected action will follow all applicable terms and conditions from the Biological Opinion dated February 27, 2003 [BO# 1-7-03-0008].

The Turnridge project was sent for formal consultation with the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fish), NOAA reference number 2003/01046. A letter of concurrence with the determination of “may affect, not likely to adversely affect” to listed fish was issued on August 29, 2003 and received by the Salem District on September 2, 2003.

## **Conclusion**

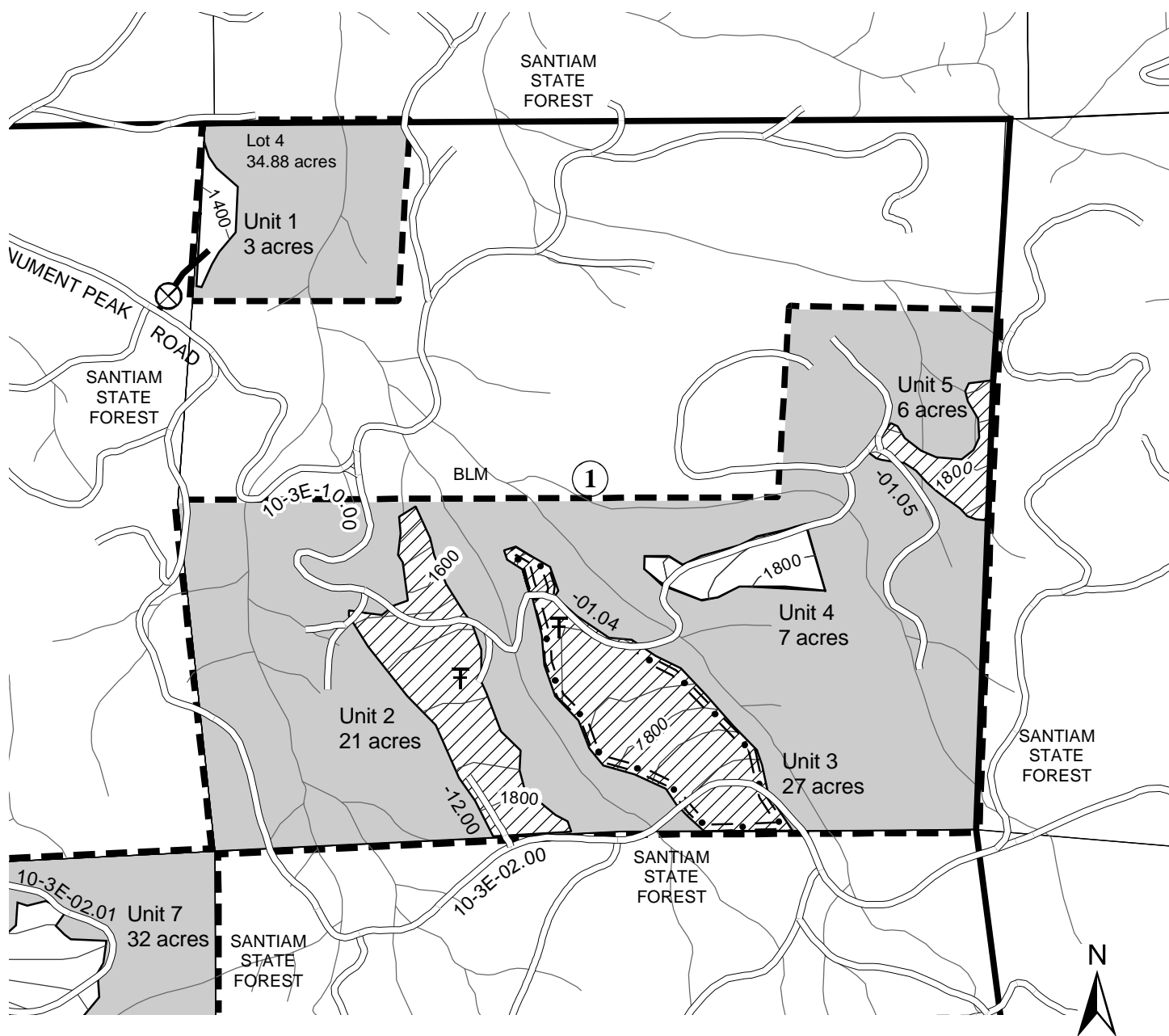
I have determined it is not necessary to change to the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI - November 2002) for the Turnridge Timber Sale for these reasons:

- The Turnridge EA, along with additional information contained in this document, fully covers the project. There are no significant new circumstances or facts relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the modification to the proposed action or its impacts, which were not addressed in the EA.
- The action is within the scope of the alternatives identified in the original EA, and the environmental impacts are within those described in the original EA and are less than or the same as those anticipated for the proposed action in that assessment.

**Protests:** In accordance with Forest Management Regulations at 43 CFR 5003.2, the decision for this timber sale will not become effective or be open to formal protest until the Notice of Sale is published "in a newspaper of general circulation in the area where the lands affected by the decision are located". Protests of this sale must be filed within 15 days of the first publication of the notice. For this project, the Notice of Sale will be published in the Stayton Mail on or around January 28, 2004. The planned sale date is February 25, 2004.

**Contact Person:** For additional information, contact Keith Walton (503) 375-5676 or Rudy Hefter (503) 315-5931, Cascades Resource Area, Salem BLM, 1717 Fabry SE, Salem, Oregon 97306.

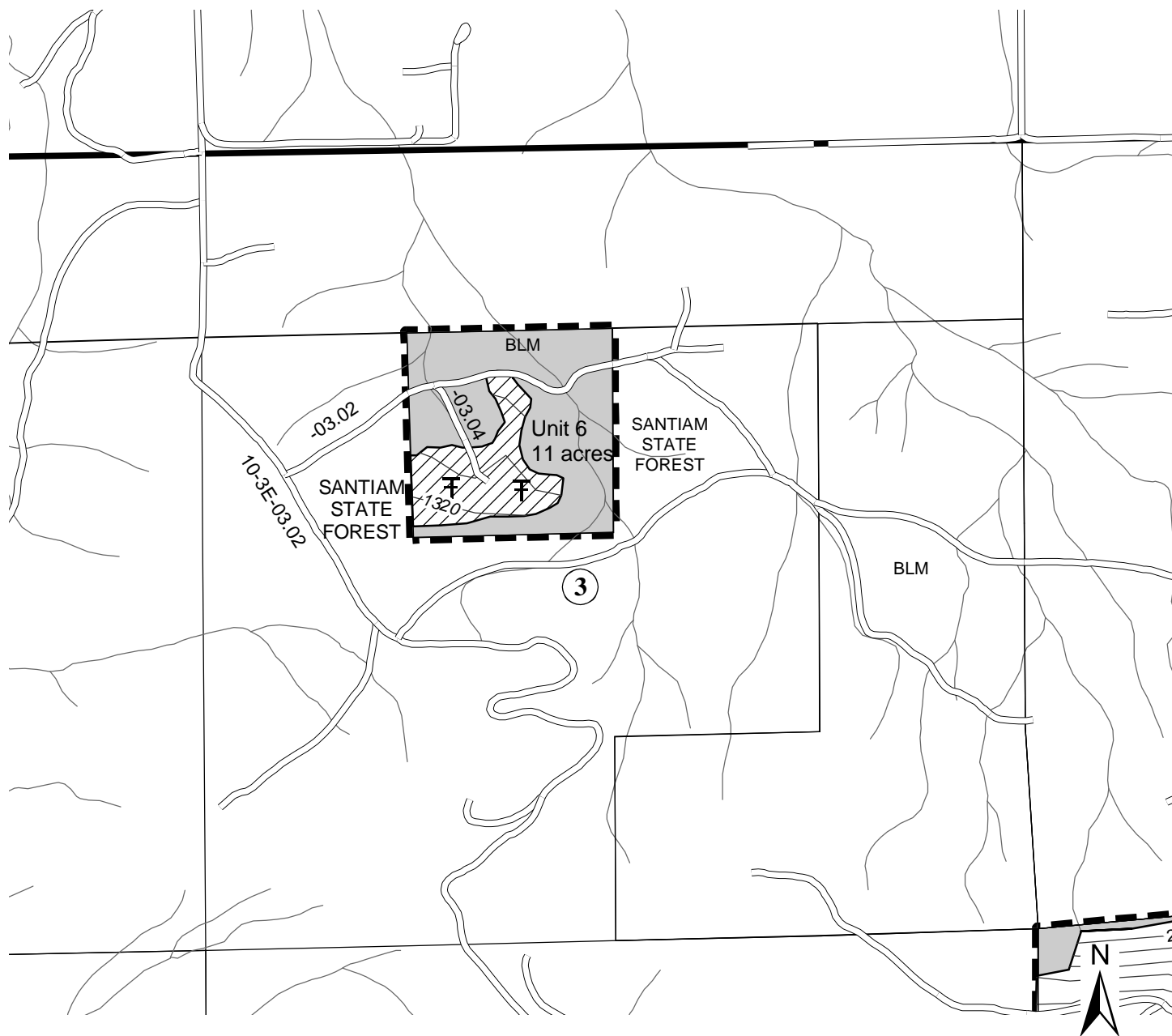
Approved by: Cindy Enstrom 1/28/2004  
Cindy Enstrom, Field Manager Date  
Cascades Resource Area

**TIMBER SALE CONTRACT MAP - Contract No. OR080-TS04-505**TRACT 2004-505  
Sheet 1 of 3T. 10 S., R. 3 E., Sections 1, 3 & 11, W.M.  
SALEM DISTRICT - OREGONScale: 1" = 1000 ft.  
Contour Interval: 100 ft.**Legend**

	Partial Cut Area		Existing Road
	Regeneration Harvest Area		Right of Way Area
	Reserve Area		Designated Skid Trail
	Boundary - Unit Area		Designated Landing
	Boundary - Contract Area		Hand Fire Trail to be Constructed
			Seed Tree
			Stream

Partial Cut Area	88.00 acres
Regeneration Harvest Area	65.00 acres
Right-of-Way Area	1.00 acre
<u>Reserve Area</u>	<u>440.88 acres</u>
Total Contract Area	594.88 acres

Boundaries of Regeneration Harvest Area and Right-of-Way Area are painted orange and posted. Boundaries of Partial Cut Area are posted only.

**TIMBER SALE CONTRACT MAP - Contract No. OR080-TS04-505**TRACT 2004-505  
Sheet 2 of 3T. 10 S., R. 3 E., Sections 1, 3 & 11, W.M.  
SALEM DISTRICT - OREGON**Legend**

- Partial Cut Area
- Regeneration Harvest Area
- Reserve Area
- Boundary - Unit Area
- Boundary - Contract Area

- Existing Road
- Right of Way Area
- Designated Skid Trail
- X Designated Landing
- Hand Fire Trail to be Constructed
- T Seed Tree
- Stream

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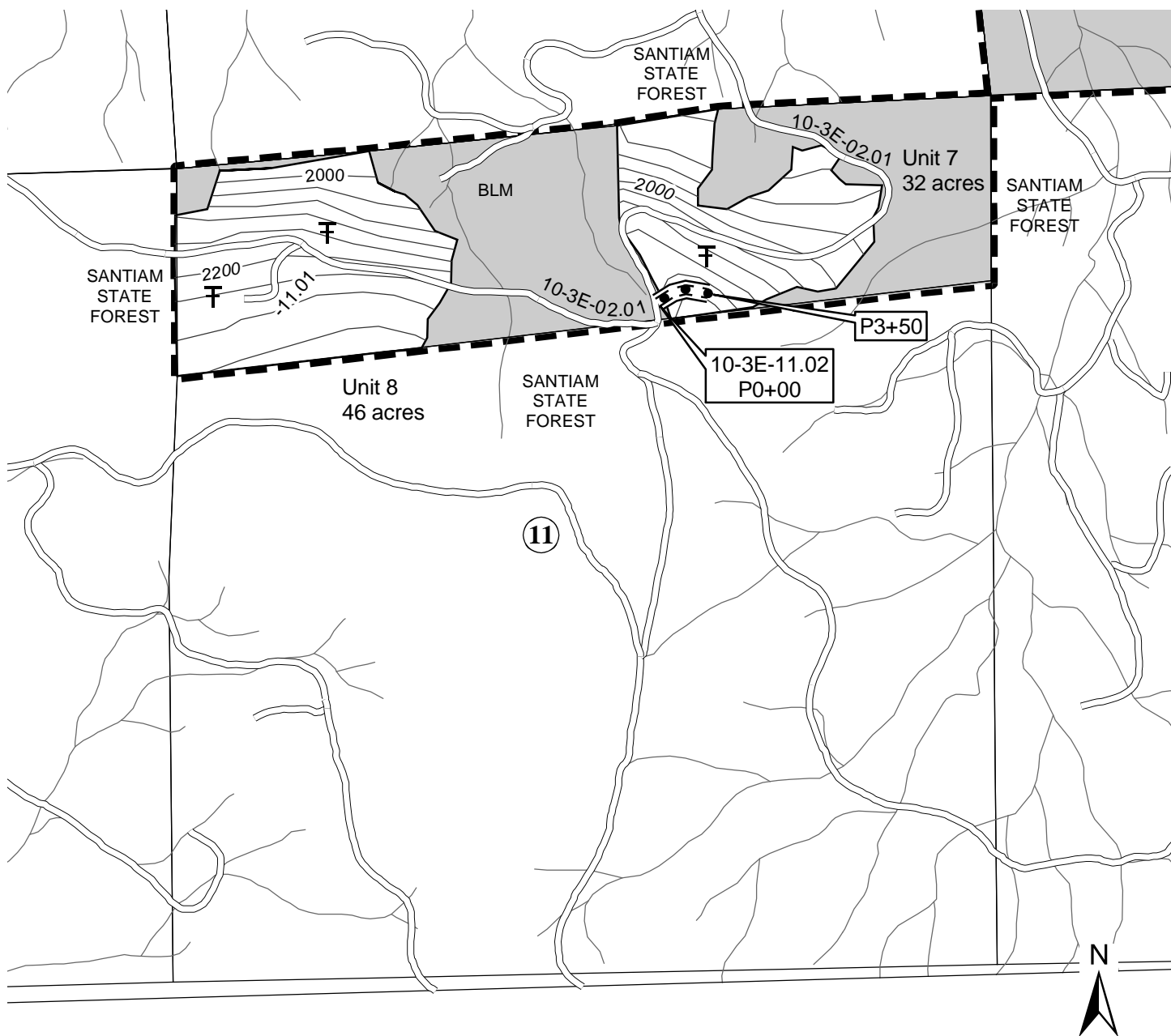
United States Department of the Interior  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Turnridge  
**EXHIBIT A**

**TIMBER SALE CONTRACT MAP - Contract No. OR080-TS04-505**

TRACT 2004-505  
Sheet 3 of 3

T. 10 S., R. 3 E., Sections 1, 3 & 11, W.M.  
SALEM DISTRICT - OREGON



**Legend**

- Partial Cut Area
- Regeneration Harvest Area
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